

**AMHERST COUNCIL ON AGING MINUTES**  
**March 5, 2009**

**Members Present:** Daniel Clapp, Doris Holden, Joan Golowich, Joel Gordon, Rosemary Kofler, Kathy Koplow, Barbara Sutherland, Juana Trujillo

**Absent:** none

**Select Board Liaison:** Gerry Weiss, absent

**Staff Present:** Nancy Pagano (Director/Program Director), Maura Plante (Assistant Director/Services), Karen Erman (Administrative Assistant), Giovanna Mix (Administrative Assistant for Programs), Priscilla Robbins (Senior Aide Program)

**Guests:** Shirley Packard (Senior Health Advisory Group), Sandra Lapollo (Director of Chicopee Senior Center), Marjorie Babb, Lillian Scott

**Welcome:**

Barbara Sutherland, Chair, called the Council on Aging meeting to order at 9:09 AM.

**Minutes of Previous Meeting:**

Sara Wolf of Stay Put made a correction to the minutes of the February 6, 2009 meeting. The minutes were approved and accepted as amended.

**Friends of Amherst Senior Center Treasurer's Report:**

**Doris** provided a handout. **Karen** reported. The first solicitation letter brought \$4,835. Since the second letter was mailed, \$5,475 has been collected. The total received for the fiscal year is \$10,410. The Checking Account has a balance of \$9,261.26 plus \$600 in the Stay Put Account. The Investment Account has a balance of \$53,084.04. The report was approved and accepted.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**David Yaukey's resignation from the COA:**

**Nancy** explained that David feels the need to cut back on some of his responsibilities and slow down. Members discussed how we might thank David and honor him. Joel suggested that members make a contribution to the Friends in honor of David's service.

**Dan made a motion: that COA members send a personal note of appreciation to David and include a gift "in honor of David Yaukey" to the Friends of the Amherst Senior Center.**

The motion was seconded and approved.

**CONTINUING BUSINESS**

**Discussion of Fees for Clinicians Providing Services in the Bangs:**

**Shirley Packard** reported that she contacted several podiatrists. She learned that a podiatrist cannot get reimbursed for foot care from Medicare **unless** that patient is diabetic.

**Nancy** reported that Dan has volunteered his time to do ear irrigations at Bangs on every other Tuesday from 3-5 PM starting April 14th.

**Dan** stated that he does not want to undercut the business of the nurse who does ear irrigations, however he prefers to charge only \$10 and that \$10 would go to the Friends rather than to himself. Dan also discussed the possibility of offering the elder the opportunity to donate \$10 to the Senior Center rather than charge a fee, which would allow the elder think more seriously about the service that is being provided to them without charge.

COA members expressed appreciation for his great contribution of service to our elders.

Nancy mentioned the problem of those elders who come under the Wellness Grant. We would need to identify those elders and not expect them to make a contribution, since the Wellness Grant is Senior Center money to begin with.

Nancy said that if the nurse (Sharon) who does ear irrigations gets fewer such appointments, it will free her up to take more foot care appointments.

The next big issue: **should we charge the clinicians a fee or should we ask them for a periodic donation** since they use our facility, we make their appointments and we take care of clean up? Nancy presented some options:

- 1) If we charge a fee, the money goes to the General Fund and not the Senior Center. The clinician may raise the fee to make up for the charge. When our most popular foot care clinician was asked to pay a fee at the Northampton Senior Center, she quit. Losing our most popular clinician would be a disaster.
- 2) If we establish a revolving account to avoid the General Fund, the Town still takes a percentage of that money.
- 3) Send a letter to each clinician, talk about our fiscal situation, tell her how happy we are with her service and ask her to consider making a donation periodically to the Friends. That money would go into the Wellness Grant Account. We would not risk losing a clinician with this option.

Dan asked guest Sandra Lapollo if they charge the clinicians a fee in Chicopee. She said they do not ask for a fee. Chicopee has a very large poor community and they want the clinician to keep the fee as low as possible. A charge might be passed on to the elder. Sandra suggested we have a number in mind if the clinician asks how much to donate.

Following a discussion, COA members decided it would be best to pursue Option 3, writing a letter. We can re-evaluate in 6 months after we see how it is going. The letter will be sent this month. If the clinician asks how much of a donation is appropriate, we would suggest 2.5% of their earnings.

### **Stay Put:**

Following the February meeting, COA members submitted questions they had about Stay Put and its possible affiliation with the Senior Center. Nancy and Maura answered most of the questions. A handout with that information was provided. The list also included four questions Nancy will bring to Town Counsel regarding liability issues and legal obligations. COA and StayPut will look at all questions and discuss them amongst themselves before both groups meet together.

One of the big philosophical questions is "What is Stay Put"? It is not an official non-profit organization with officers, by laws, and a membership list. In reality, it is a group of elders who are concerned about remaining independent and are looking for ways to help each other to find services so they can stay in their homes. Nancy sees them as volunteers who would be covered by the Town self-insured policy. Nancy is initially eager for a collaboration to help Maura to expand her service around home health and relieve some of the pressure she is under. The Senior Center really needs another Social Worker. More elders need services, their needs are greater and they are living longer. Nancy wants to be sure that StayPut sees themselves as more than a unified formal group primarily concerned with the 200 or so elders on their mailing list. If they collaborate with the Senior Center they must see **all** elders in the community as equal, not just offer services to elders on their mailing list. The elder living in public housing must get the same attention and service as the elder who is a college alumnus. The StayPut model has been like a system in Boston in which members pay a fee for a menu of services. Many of our elders are not be able to pay for a referral.

**Joel** said that Nancy summarized things well. StayPut was organized initially to be a private group but ran into difficulties. Since they had overlapping interests with the Senior Center they approached Nancy. He thinks if StayPut forms a relationship with the Senior Center it will be a trial situation. He hopes that as StayPut volunteers begin to work at the Senior Center whatever differences there may have been, their goals will become closer to the goals of the Senior Center. He would like to see the relationship between StayPut and the Senior Center be an informal arrangement initially, rather than a formal affiliation. Perhaps for now to say: The COA welcomes the efforts of the steering group and looks forward to working with the group.

Joel added, the StayPut letter should state "Our services will be open to all seniors." He asked if StayPut volunteers would need to have a CORI check. Maura said "yes, anyone who works in a Senior Center must have a CORI check".

**Joan** asked about health care. Nancy clarified that the Senior Center does not recommend a particular physician. They may give out a list of agencies or providers but do not recommend a specific person.

**Joel** said that StayPut proposes putting up a list of providers of services. He worries about some providers not being included in that list. Nancy suggested that could be alleviated by putting periodic notes in the media inviting people who provide services to contact us to be part of the list.

**Dan** suggested we form a sub-committee to look more carefully at all the questions and report back at the next COA meeting in April. The final discussion with the StayPut Steering Group will take place at the May meeting.

**Joan, Joel and Dan will be on the sub-committee.**

## **SUB-COMMITTEE UPDATE**

### **Ad Hoc survey Committee:**

**Sandra Lapollo** said that the tool they used for the Chicopee survey could be modified fairly quickly for Amherst purposes. Chicopee owns the tool but Sandra is willing to give it to us. UConn responded to the letter quickly with an actual proposal, time frame and estimate of cost. The cost would be \$21,000 for older adults, \$26,000 if boomers are included. The cost includes conducting the survey, a lottery drawing for gift certificates to increase the rate of response, analysis of the information gathered, bound reports and presentations. The survey in Chicopee was very valuable in showing what the older population looked like and what their circumstances were. It dispelled some real myths.

UMass Professor Randall Stokes is also interested in the project and wants to meet to talk about it. UMass has never done such a survey. UConn does them nationwide. Based on their work we can see how Amherst compares to the rest of the State and nationally.

The Ad Hoc committee would like the survey done sooner rather than later because of budget issues facing us. In making decisions we need to clarify just who the population of older adults is and what their circumstances and needs are.

Joel reminded us that, because of the cost, fundraising would be essential. Nancy said the COA would be asked to decide how much we would ask of the Friends to help cover costs and how the COA members themselves could help with fundraising. Sandra said a plan must be developed for fundraising.

### **Highland Valley Elder Services:**

**Joan** reported that Expo they had planned for March 2nd was snowed out. It will be held the first Monday of April.

## **STAFF REPORTS**

### **Amherst College Emergency Funds:**

**Maura** reported that of the \$10,000 gift she has paid out \$2,394 to 9 people mainly for utilities arrearage.

**Dan** suggested sending an official 'Thank You' to Amherst College. Maura has asked recipients to send a thank you note. **Joel** did send a personal note of thanks to Amherst College for their gift at the time the grant was announced.

**Nancy** also suggested sending a 'Thank You' from the COA to the Sheriff's Department for the blankets they donated. Elders who receive the blankets are also being asked to send a thank you.

### **Nancy's Meeting with Larry:**

**Nancy** and Larry talked about the budget. Larry recognizes that the Senior Center is at the bottom of what can be cut. Larry and John plan to meet with the Friends on March 12 at 3:30 to talk about fundraising. COA members are invited to attend.

### **Nominating Committee:**

**Dan, Barbara, and Rosemary** will be on the Nominating Committee to find a replacement for David Yaukey.

### **Gold Cane:**

The last recipient of the Boston Post Cane has died. Nancy has a new list of people to be considered. It is to be given to the oldest person in Amherst who has resided in Amherst for 10 years or more.

### **250<sup>th</sup> Parade:**

Nancy invited members to a float-making class if the COA wants to have a float in the Town's 250<sup>th</sup> Parade. Members decided they did not have the time to make a float.

Marjorie Babb asked if the Senior Center wants to participate in the Town's 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Parade on September 27<sup>th</sup>.

**Dan made a motion: The Senior Center plans to participate in the parade by marching with a banner and a van for those who can't march.** It was seconded and approved.

The COA adjourned at 10:46 AM.

**The next meeting of the COA will be held on April 2, 2009 at 9:00 AM.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Rosemary Kofler, Secretary

The approved minutes of the February 6, 2009 meeting were delivered to the Select Board Office to be filed.